

Case Number:	CM14-0185593		
Date Assigned:	11/13/2014	Date of Injury:	04/14/1988
Decision Date:	12/15/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/15/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/07/2014

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to an expert reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Anesthesiology, has a subspecialty in Pain Management and is licensed to practice in California. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The expert reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 76-year-old female with a 4/14/88 date of injury. At the time (10/1/14) of request for authorization for Transforaminal Epidural Steroid Injection, bilateral L4-L5, there is documentation of subjective (low back pain radiating to the bilateral lower extremities) and objective (positive straight leg raise, diffuse facet tenderness bilaterally, and tenderness to palpitation over the sciatic notch) findings. The current diagnoses includes chronic pain syndrome, degeneration of lumbosacral intervertebral disc, thoracic/lumbosacral neuritis, lumbosacral spondylosis without myelopathy, and generalized osteoarthritis. The treatment to date includes acupuncture, epidural steroid injections, and medications. Medical reports identify greater than 60% relief of low back pain and bilateral lower extremity pain that increased functional capacity and endurance for activities as a result of previous epidural injections. There is no documentation of pain relief for six to eight weeks and decreased need for pain medications following previous steroid injections.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

Transforaminal Epidural Steroid Injection, bilateral L4-L5: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural Steroid Injections Page(s): 45-46.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 300. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low Back, Epidural Steroid Injections (ESIs)

Decision rationale: The MTUS reference to ACOEM guidelines identifies documentations of objective radiculopathy in an effort to avoid surgery as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of epidural steroid injections. ODG identifies documentation of at least 50-70% pain relief for six to eight weeks, with a general recommendation of no more than 4 blocks per region per year, as well as decreased need for pain medications, and functional response as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of additional epidural steroid injections. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of herniated lumbar disc and lumbar disc disorder. In addition, given documentation of greater than 60% relief of low back pain and bilateral lower extremity pain that increased functional capacity and endurance for activities as a result of previous epidural injections, there is documentation of at least 50-70% pain relief and functional response following previous steroid injections. However, there is no documentation of pain relief for six to eight weeks and decreased need for pain medications following previous steroid injections. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Transforaminal Epidural Steroid Injection, bilateral L4-L5 is not medically necessary.